



## Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board Meeting Tuesday, October 29, 2013 9:00 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Amy Bellisano, Todd Bonsall (representing Brian Loughlin), Roseann Bucciarelli, Robert Davis, William Dennison (representing Gloria Aftansk), Kevin Duncan, Janice Fishbein, Nick Gacos, Maria Gonzalez, Dan Henrickson, Adrienne Keaton, Iris Moncion, Jim Perry, Joseph Picone, Peter Reno, Senovia Robles, Ginny Romeo, Barbara Roos, Jill Schiff, Michelle Suskind, Bernice Proctor-Venable, Earl Wiggle and Henrietta Wilson (representing Angela Mackaronis)

**STAFF:** Jane Brady, John Ross and Patti Seip

**GUESTS:** Dan Frankel, Borough of Sayreville

### **Call to Order:**

WIB Chair, Jill Schiff called the meeting to order. Notice of this meeting was made pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, NJSA 10:4-10.

### **MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING:**

The minutes of the last meeting held on July 30th were submitted for approval. Barbara Roos made a motion that the minutes be approved as written; Roseann Bucciarelli seconded and the motion carried.

### **INTRODUCTIONS:**

Jill Schiff introduced and welcomed the following individuals as members to the Board:

- Nick Gacos is the President of Colorado Café Associates. He served on the WIB several years ago, as well as WIB Chair;
- Iris Moncion is the Service Access Center Supervisor for the Puerto Rican Action Board located in New Brunswick;
- Peter Reno is the General Manager of Distribution at Dr. Leonards located in Edison; and
- Ginny Romeo serves as the Secretary/Treasurer-Controller of Port Jersey Logistics located in Dayton

### **NJ STATE EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING COMMISSION RECERTIFICATION EVALUATION:**

Jane Brady reminded members of the discussion held at the last meeting concerning the Middlesex WIB submitting documents to the NJ State Employment & Training Commission (NJSETC) as a part of the Recertification process. All WIBs throughout the State must be recertified by January of 2014. Staff have been preparing for this throughout the year and submitting required documents to the SETC. Members were provided a copy of the SETC outline showing the status of the Recertification for Middlesex County as of August 27<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Brady noted that Middlesex County is in good shape with 14 satisfactory areas and only one (1) caution. The caution applies to the fact that Middlesex County does not have a One-Stop Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed by the N.J. Department of Labor and Workforce Development. However, it was noted that this should not be reflected as a caution area, as the State has the MOU but the document has not been executed by the Commissioner. The State has only signed off on one (1) Partner MOU for the entire State.

Ms. Brady commented that the State has indicated they would like to have the same MOU template used by all the WIBs. However, the WIBs are not agreeable to this, as they have prepared their MOU based on input from their One-Stop partners. The Middlesex County Partner MOU was prepared at the end of last year based on what the SETC indicated should be included. The Commissioner has indicated that he would not be signing the MOUs. She noted, however, that this issue will not hold up the Recertification. She also noted that Middlesex County is one of the few WIBs with only one (1) cautionary item, as many counties have several.

Amy Bellisano asked if the WIB could go on record indicating this caution is unfair, as there is nothing that can be done about it at the local level. Dan Henrickson also agreed, asking if a letter could be sent expressing the board's opinion. Nick Gacos informed Ms. Brady that he was recently reappointed to the SETC and offered his assistance, if needed. It was agreed that a letter expressing the Board's opinion that this cautionary area is unfair and should be removed, should be included in the Recertification documents submitted to the State.

#### **FINAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR 2012-2013:**

Members were provided a copy of the final performance measures for 2012-2013, covering the period July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. It was mentioned that Middlesex County met or exceeded all the required performance measures. Ms. Brady commended staff for their hard work throughout the year in order to achieve these numbers. She also noted that Middlesex County received more funds this year than last year, which means staff will have to push even harder to pass the performance measures.

#### **UPDATE ON LAST YEAR'S EVALUATION PROJECT OF THE BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER:**

Members were reminded that the board chose, as the 2012 WIB evaluation project, to compare the operation of the Business Resource Center (BRC) while under our responsibility versus when under the State's. Unfortunately, this comparison was unable to be conducted due to the State indicating they had no records on file for when they ran the BRC. Therefore, it was decided to evaluate the BRC during the past two (2) years of operation while under Middlesex County's guidance to determine if activities were being performed that should be, and if they were being done well. Recommendations for improvement of the BRC were approved by the Board at the April 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Members were provided a status report, prepared by Nina Rios-Rivera, Manager of the Business Development Unit (BDU), based on those recommendations. Jane Brady stated that staff will continue to do what they are supposed to be doing, and at the end of this program year, members will be provided with a full report on how the BRC performed based on the recommendations.

Jane Brady provided a summary of workshops, seminars and on-site recruitments being held at the One-Stops. She indicated that lack of conference room space has proven to be an issue. Dr. Bernice Venable suggested that staff contact Elayne Rodgers at the Small Business Development office in Piscataway. She stated they have small, medium and large meeting rooms at their new location. As long as the rooms are provided free of charge, this may be another option.

Jane Brady asked that anyone with any questions on the BRC Recommendations report should contact her or Nina Rios-Rivera.

#### **DISCUSSION ON NEW EVALUATION PROJECT:**

Members were previously provided a copy of the proposed new WIB Evaluation Project for 2013-2014. Jane Brady informed members that this is another requirement by the SETC. The Board is required to vote today on a project for next year, which must then be forwarded on to SETC.

One (1) project proposed by staff is to evaluate whether or not the One-Stop is providing effective services to clients with at least some post-secondary education. The second evaluation possibility is to determine if appropriate training is being provided for clients in order to obtain employment in the 20 most in-demand jobs. Ms. Brady asked if anyone had any other ideas for evaluation projects to be considered.

Amy Bellisano stated that according to previous meetings, it was indicated that State data cannot be considered relevant and/or current. She felt the first project would be more beneficial to the One-Stop. Barbara Roos agreed with Amy's comments

With regard to the second project, Janice Fishbein stated that training should be provided in jobs that employers in our area are seeking. Jane Brady responded that whenever staff determines there is a need for training in an occupational area that is not on the In-Demand List, a waiver request is submitted to the State for that occupation to be included for our County. Middlesex County has submitted several requests to the State. The State has not updated the In-Demand List in two (2) years and they have indicated it will not be updated in the near future.

After discussion, a motion was made by Amy Bellisano to approve the Evaluation Project for 2013-2014 on whether or not the One-Stop is providing effective services to clients with at least some post-secondary education. Roseann Bucciarelli seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

#### **ANNUAL REPORT FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2012:**

Members were previously provided a copy of the WIB Annual Report for Program Year 2012, which was sent via regular mail. Jane Brady commented that the Annual Report is required every year by the SETC.

Dr. Bernice Venable made a motion acknowledging receipt and submission of the WIB Annual Report; Henrietta Wilson seconded and the motion carried.

#### **BUSINESS OUTREACH GOALS:**

Kathy Shaw, Chair of the Business Outreach Committee, had to leave the meeting earlier. Therefore, Jane Brady provided the Business Outreach Committee report in her absence.

The Business Outreach Committee goals for 2013-2014 were forwarded to members previously via email. Proposed goals are similar to last year's, with a few exceptions. The committee uses these goals to ensure they are doing what is expected of them throughout the year.

Ms. Brady provided a brief overview of the goals for next year. It was noted that Objective 2 of the committee is to increase awareness of the business services available through the One-Stop system. This is being done as just recently, thanks to the efforts of fellow board member, Dan Henrickson, Jane Brady and Garret Gega, staff Job Developer, were on WCTC radio station to speak about services available at the One-Stop and Business Development Unit activities.

Jane Brady also spoke about the new portal that will be available in the near future on the Middlesex County website. This portal will provide new businesses with information, including properties that are available within the County, assets Middlesex County has to offer, and incentives available for employers that locate within the County. Kathy Shaw will have more information on this. Jane Brady mentioned that, from her knowledge, Middlesex County will be the only county in the state with this information available on-line. Jill Schiff questioned if they have plans to promote this outside the County. Amy Bellisano indicated that the State should be aware of this in order to promote the County when they go outside the state to promote businesses to relocate. Dan Frankel suggested a real estate industry seminar/workshop be held to educate them about Middlesex County, as they may then be able to market the county better. Also, he suggested that members of the board, especially those in the areas of logistics, should promote this as well. The word needs to get out about the services the county has to offer.

Dr. Bernice Venable made a motion to approve the Business Outreach Committee goals for 2013-2014; Dan Henrickson seconded, and the motion carried.

### **2014-2017 STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Members were provided a copy of the DRAFT Strategic Plan via email prior to the meeting. Jane Brady informed members that this is a document that was drafted as a result of four (4) meetings held by the Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Roseann Bucciarelli.

She expressed her appreciation to committee members for their time and input, and especially Roseann Bucciarelli for sharing in the arduous task of editing the document. She reminded members that this is not the final document, but was sent for members' review of content only.

The information contained within the document is somewhat dictated by the SETC. They provide an outline which the committee followed somewhat. The team had some very strong opinions on what the state needs to do, how things need to change at the state level, and also what will be done internally to assess what we want to achieve.

The Plan must be submitted to SETC by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Being that the WIB does not meet again until the end of January, the draft was forwarded to the members for review to be discussed and voted on at this meeting. In addition, the Plan must be placed on the department's website for thirty (30) days for public review and comment. This will be happening at the same time the document is submitted to SETC.

Joe Picone made a motion to approve the Strategic Plan for 2014-2017; Dr. Venable seconded the motion and the motion carried.

### **YOUTH FOLLOW-UP POLICY:**

Members were provided a copy of the proposed Youth Follow-Up Policy prior to the meeting. Jane Brady stated that this policy is a requirement of the federal government and provided a brief summary of the policy. Roseann Bucciarelli made a motion to accept the Youth Follow-Up Policy; Jim Perry seconded the motion and the motion carried.

### **JOB FAIR:**

Pictures taken at the New Brunswick Job Fair, held on October 9<sup>th</sup> at the Rutgers Labor Education Center, were passed around. This job fair was attended by more than 470 jobseekers and 51 employers.

Ms. Brady indicated that no further job fairs will be held until spring of next year. The main problem in holding job fairs is finding a location large enough for the crowds, as well as providing free, ample parking. The New Brunswick Job Fair was the only location that did not provide a facility free of charge. Amy Bellisano suggested staff check with churches, as they may have a room available that would be suitable for such an event. Ms. Brady responded that staff would definitely pursue this option. Another idea would be to contact New Brunswick Public Schools to see if one of their schools could be utilized during the summer. With school closed for the summer, they should have the space and plenty of parking.

### **WORKFIRST NEW JERSEY REPORT:**

John Ross, Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) Director announced there are currently two (2) issues of concern with the WFNJ program.

One issue is the participation rate of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) clients. TANF clients are clients who receive public assistance with dependents under the age of 18. There are a number of activities for this clientele but the percentage rate is very low. Several initiatives were started recently, in partnership with the Middlesex County Board of Social Services, to provide counseling for the TANF individuals with problems that are preventing them from participating in the program.

Another issue is that of the Community Work Experience Program (CWEP). One of the activities in the CWEP program is the requirement to locate a full-time job in the workplace. Middlesex County College (MCC), one of the CWEP vendors, has indicated they are encountering the problem that companies are hiring individuals less than the required 30 hours per week. This has resulted in a large number of clients accepting jobs working less than the 30 hours per week, leaving ten (10) hours per week they are not working, which then affects the county's participation rate. In speaking with DOL representatives, it was indicated that other counties are encountering this same problem. Mr. Ross will be speaking with other counties to see how they are dealing with this problem.

He also reported that the Board of Chosen Freeholders recently approved a grant from the State of New Jersey for a federal transportation block grant in the amount of \$211,000. This funding is specifically for transportation costs for the TANF component. There were then issues that arose with the county with respect to providing transportation for the second half of this year, under this grant. A meeting will be held with county representatives this week to discuss this matter further. An update will be provided at the January 2014 WIB meeting.

#### **STATUS OF REQUESTS TO THE SETC:**

Jane Brady reminded members that at the last board meeting, members expressed their concern over being asked to endorse the poverty income level, and therefore, asked only that receipt be acknowledged and include a statement that the board would not accept the poverty levels. A letter was sent to the NJSETC requesting they ask that the levels be changed. She attended the SETC meeting in December and spoke on this issue. Dennis Bone, Chair of the SETC, said they would take this matter into consideration. The SETC meets again on November 26<sup>th</sup>, and hopefully, she will be able to attend the meeting to see if anything has progressed on this issue.

Ms. Brady also indicated that the Youth Investment Council's concern over the lack of curriculum standards in ITA training programs has not been addressed by the SETC. She informed members that the poverty income level for a family of four (4) is \$26,000. Any youth with a family income over \$26,000 is not considered eligible to participate in the youth program. She assured members that this issue will not be dropped.

#### **NEW TRAINING SCHOOLS:**

Jane Brady was happy to report that Raritan Valley Community College has agreed to execute our Master Agreement, which means clients will now have the option to attend courses they provide that are not offered by MCC, such as Auto Mechanics and Cosmetology.

In the past, other community colleges have not wanted to accept WIA clients due to the holdback policy we have in place, meaning they are required to provide job placement for WIA graduates within the required time period (currently six months) or they do not receive the 20% hold-back placement fee. They did not like this requirement and refused to sign the agreement.

Brookdale Community College has also indicated they are willing to provide non-credit courses. It is hoped the Master Agreement with this school will be executed shortly.

A Master Agreement is already in place with Union County College.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- Youth Investment Council: Earl Wiggley, Chair of the Youth Investment Council, reported that, as indicated by Jane Brady previously, no word has been received from the SETC regarding the YIC's request for the SETC to look at the curriculum issues in the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), as there is no standardization of training programs among schools for the same occupational training, and some schools are not training for the needs of the employer for that occupation. This same issue was included in the Strategic Plan voted on by the board earlier.

The MC4YOU staff is adding basic computer skills to their orientation program for out-of-school youth. MCC already includes this in their Work Readiness program.

Youth toured a nursing home and a large distribution center this fall. They are scheduled to tour a medical laboratory facility next month. Mr. Wiggley noted that youth tour various facilities for the primary purpose of seeing the various types of occupations in the job market.

Committee members will be reviewing the goals at the next meeting scheduled for November 7<sup>th</sup>, which will then be finalized and submitted to the full board for approval at the January 2014 meeting.

- Literacy Committee: In the absence of Literacy Committee Chair, Gloria Aftanski, Jane Brady provided the committee report.

She announced that the current GED test expires December 31<sup>st</sup>, and will no longer be available. The new GED test will not be approved until the State Board of Education meets in December. It is expected that the Board of Education will approve three (3) vendors: Pearson Education, McGraw Hill and ETS. The testing centers will decide which one they will offer, which will then require their Boards of Education approval. The testing center will then need time to get set up for that particular test.

Ms. Brady stated that in three (3) years, all GED tests must be administered by computer only. McGraw-Hill and ETS now provides paper and computer tests. Pearson Education provides computerized tests only. It was also noted that the fee for taking the GED test from McGraw Hill and ETS is \$50, yet Pearson is \$150. Senovia Robles from Perth Amboy Adult Education Center informed members that \$50 does not even cover the costs associated with administering the GED test.

#### **ITEMS IN MEETING PACKET:**

PLACEMENT REPORT: Jane Brady indicated that at the last meeting, Amy Bellisano has asked for a placement report be provided showing the number of clients placed into jobs that they were actually trained for. Ms. Brady asked staff to provide a report providing data covering an 18 month period. Unfortunately, the report was not available for this meeting. However, she was pleased to note that in approximately 70% of all cases, clients obtained employment in their training related occupation. This report will be forwarded to members once available.

Ms. Brady reported that a few years ago, in light of the economy, the board voted to increase the time period allowed for schools to obtain placement for their WIA clients, from six (6) months to nine (9) months. After research, it has been determined that almost every client is now obtaining employment within a six (6) month period, if not before, completion of their training. Therefore, the Executive Committee voted to decrease the time period permitted for clients to obtain employment back to six (6) months upon completion of training. This new policy will go into effect November 1<sup>st</sup>. This policy puts the onus back on the schools to secure employment for the client. If a school does not place 70% of their graduates, we stop referring clients to the school.

YOUTH CAREER CALENDAR: Members were provided a copy of the 2013-2014 Youth Career Calendar. This calendar is delivered to all the high schools for distribution to their 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

A copy of the Occupational Training Flyer was included in members' meeting packet as well as the One-Stop booklet and updated Business Resource Center folder. Ms. Brady indicated that if anyone would like additional copies, they should contact her.

Ms. Brady reported that we are finally achieved 53% in private sector membership. The SETC requires that we maintain at least 51% private sector representation.

Staff Changes: Ms. Brady announced that this is the last meeting for Patti Seip, as she will be retiring in December. Her replacement will begin with the department on Tuesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. Members of the board offered their congratulations to Patti, who in turn, expressed her appreciation for their comments and indicated it was a pleasure working with them as well.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

## **ITEMS INCLUDED IN MEETING PACKET**

- SETC Feedback Report dated August 27, 2013
- Performance Matters Report – Program Year 2012 – FINAL
- Business Resource Center Recommendation
- Department Budget – Program Year 2013 – Expended as of 9/30/13
- Workforce Development Data Report – for the period 7/1/13 to 9/30/13
- Jobs4Jersey.com – employer J4J Registration Script
- On Ramp – top 12 Reasons why employers need OnRamp
- NJ DOIWD - WIB Area Employment & Wages for 2012
- NJ SETC – Policy on Local WIB Appointments and Process
- Newspaper Article – Middlesex Youth Program at MCC (Tour at Roosevelt Care Center)
- WIB Meeting Schedule for 2014
- Middlesex County WIB Membership Directory
- Business Resource Center Folder
- Flyer: Interested in Occupational Training at No Cost to You?
- Youth Career Calendar – 2013-2014
- One-Stop Career Center Booklet

## **ITEMS PROVIDED PRIOR TO MEETING**

- Agenda
- Minutes of July 2013 Meeting
- Announcements
- Proposed New Evaluation Project
- Business Outreach Goals for 2013-2014
- Youth Follow-Up Policy
- Draft Copy of the WIB 3 Year Strategic Plan

<b>NEXT MEETING DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2014</b>
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